

Bedford County Schools
Foundational Literacy Skills Plan
Approved: May 26, 2021

This Foundational Literacy Skills Plan has been approved by the Tennessee Department of Education and meets the requirements of the *Tennessee Literacy Success Act*. All portions of the Foundational Literacy Skills plan were submitted to the department and approved. To view the supplemental artifacts, please contact the district directly.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades K-2

Bedford County Schools uses a foundational skills curriculum, Core Knowledge Language Arts, grounded in the Science of Reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. This curriculum is divided into two strands: Skills and Knowledge. The Knowledge Strand is centered around complex narrative and informational read-aloud texts and focuses on background knowledge, vocabulary acquisition, analysis of complex texts, and speaking and listening. The Skills strand provides comprehensive instruction in foundational skills, such as phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition; language skills, including conventions of English, spelling, and grammar; reading comprehension; and writing instruction. These four guiding principles make up the Skills Strand:

- **Explicit Phonics:** Explicit, systematic phonics instruction is a more effective way to teach decoding than “whole language” or whole word methods.
- **Synthetic Phonics:** Synthetic phonics (or linguistic phonics), in which instruction is oriented from sound to letter, is an especially powerful way to teach phonics.
- **Repeated Oral Practice:** Repeated oral practice and oral reading are proven methods of improving fluency.
- **Intensive Practice:** Intensive practice with skills-aligned texts is essential in order to build reliability and automaticity in reading.

Additionally, CKLA engages students in ongoing reading fluency and comprehension practice with decodable readers aligned to the skills students are learning to make meaning from texts and to produce the written word. These readers increase in length and complexity as students develop their reading and spelling skills. Each strand consists of 60 minutes (120 total) of instruction, but Bedford County Schools has devoted 180 minutes of instruction for both strands with 60 minutes for Knowledge and 120 minutes for Foundational Skills for K-2nd students. This instructional time includes activities that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary word work. During the foundational skills instruction block, teachers explicitly teach sounds, students practice saying the sound, teachers model writing the sound, students learn how the sound symbols look, students refer to their individual code chart

on which they write the sound, and students apply the skill in independent practice. As students progress with learning the sounds, they begin to decode blends and digraphs and learn the most common spellings for each sound. Students also practice the sounds in and out of context. Bedford County Schools plans to have K-2nd teachers internalize the CKLA lessons and analyze the lesson pacing of instruction to make sure they remain focused on the intent of the lessons' outcomes and devote the correct amount of time for each portion.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Bedford County Schools uses Great Minds: Wit & Wisdom curriculum for grades 3-5 which has an integrated literacy block grounded in the Science of Reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Wit & Wisdom is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum that helps students celebrate the joy of reading and writing while empowering them to read complex texts. Wit & Wisdom is a 90 minute program, but Bedford County Schools has devoted 120 minutes of instruction for the curriculum. During the integrated ELA block, Bedford County Schools provides 90 minutes of instruction that engages students in texts and activities purposefully sequenced to build knowledge in literature, science, history, social studies, and the arts by incorporating reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. A core lesson sequence in grades 3-5 Wit & Wisdom includes a framework of text-specific content questioning to engage students in the module content and in the process of reading complex texts. Students engage in daily work around reading, understanding, and analyzing complex texts. Students articulate their learning through speaking and writing about their knowledge of the topic of study. Students also have regular practice examining the crafts of writing, speaking, and listening through Craft Questions: students develop responses to the texts they read and grow their critical thinking skills. Some daily lessons give students targeted fluency practice through activities such as reader's theater, poetry readings, and student-led declamation. In addition to directly addressing grade level reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards, Core lessons provide embedded instruction in grade level foundational reading skills such as spelling, language, and vocabulary. One of the instructional routines is an ongoing, sequential, and explicit writing instruction where students learn to write and write to learn. The curriculum meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons through the Deep Dives portion. Bedford County Schools students are engaged in daily 30 minute Deep Dives that follow each core lesson focused on vocabulary study, grammar, morphology, spelling, writing, and fluency. Vocabulary and language skill instruction is also integrated into core lessons, and explicit fluency instruction and meaningful fluency practice occur in each Wit & Wisdom module. Students also practice fluency through homework passages taken from module texts to build fluency and deepen comprehension of those texts. Bedford County Schools plan to train all 3rd-5th teachers on the Achieve the Core Foundational Skills Components and require them to embed foundational skills components during the core lesson when they internalize the lessons.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

Bedford County Schools has adopted two state approved curriculums (CKLA for K-2nd and Wit & Wisdom for 3rd-5th) for ELA instruction. The district has devoted more time to ELA instruction than required by the two curriculums to allow K-5th teachers to address foundational skills needs. In K-2nd Skills lessons, students are exposed to 100% decodable readers and are able to see and practice the skills learned in context. K-2nd students also have access to a CKLA Hub, a digital student experience designed to connect students to high quality media and apps within the CKAL program. One component of the CKLA Hub is a sounds library that reinforces the sounds learned through correct pronunciations, the correct way to write the symbol for the sounds, and exposure to words with those sounds. The Hub also has the 100% decodables read aloud for students. K-2nd students also have access to CKLA's Amplify Reading, which is a digital personalized learning path that ensures each student receives individual practice and specific skills instruction needed. In 3rd-5th lessons, teachers devote time to small group instruction to address foundational skills deficits.

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements.

Bedford County Schools uses two universal screeners. In grades K-2, Bedford County Schools uses Dibels 8th as its universal screener. In grades 3-5, Bedford County Schools uses EasyCBM as its universal screener.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Bedford County Schools administers three reading universal screeners to K-5th students. In the fall, K-2nd students are given the Dibels 8th universal screener, and 3rd-5th students are given the EasyCBM universal screener to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at-risk". Grade level teachers, interventionists, and building administrators review universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-25th percentile. Students scoring in that range are classified as Tier II or III and in need of reading intervention support and are given a diagnostic (Survey Level Assessment) to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 30 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

Bedford County Schools has research-based option for reading intervention support available to our students who are "at-risk" and/or have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our recently adopted K-2nd ELA curriculum, CKLA, contains an Assessment and Remediation Guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address targeted skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. The CKLA Assessment and Remediation Guide provide multiple additional resources for teachers to use as they support students on their path to mastery of grade-level foundational skills. For grades 3-5, Wit & Wisdom materials provide a range of support for both teachers and students to address specific students' skill gaps and progress monitor for student improvement.

Data teams, including classroom teachers, administrators, interventionists, and other support areas (ESL/SPED) teacher will meet every 4.5 weeks to review students' progress monitoring data to make informed decisions regarding RTI. If a student is not making progress, the data team will construct an individualized plan for each student which may include a change to duration, materials used, and intensity. Notification of any RTI changes will be sent home to parents. If the intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as SPIRE or Read Naturally) become an option. Data teams will determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement, etc.) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or provider.

Bedford County Schools K-5 students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outline in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law's requirements.

Bedford County Schools uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. The district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified that the SPIRE curriculum is used to support those students, as it is based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong support for those students. Interventions take place daily using a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in that skill.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Bedford County Schools will explain to parents about the importance of students knowing how to read by grade 3. Parents will be informed that literacy is critical to a student's ability to understand, learn about, and share ideas with the world. Most students can't read the words they know how to say. Reading Comprehension has two parts- Word Recognition and Language Comprehension. In 2019 according to NAEP, the National Association for Education Programs, only 35% of 4th graders were proficient in reading. Reading comprehension is vital by 3rd grade. Children reading at grade level are more likely to stay on grade level over time, graduate from high school, enter and complete post-secondary programs, and remain gainfully employed later in life. Parents want to see their child excel, and it can be frustrating if a child falls behind in reading and math.

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) is the practice of providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to a student's needs. It involves the frequent monitoring of progress in order to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals. It also involves applying student response data to inform important educational decisions.

Bedford County Schools notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile) immediately after the fall, winter, and spring universal screeners are administered. Although your child is receiving direct instruction daily in ELA (English/Language Arts) he/she scored below the 25th percentile in one or

more benchmark measures in reading and will benefit from additional academic support in the subject area specified below. Scoring 25th percentile and below indicates your child is not performing on grade level in reading and needs some academic support. Students' scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. Parents are informed about what intervention and the amount of time the student will receive to address the skill deficits. Bedford County Schools' teams analyze students' progress monitoring data, conduct data team meetings every 4.5 weeks, and send notifications home to inform parents about how students are assessed and subsequently their child's progress or lack thereof. In the notifications, school data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screener data.

Lastly, Bedford County Schools will suggest the following supports for families to use at home when students are having difficulty.

- Talk with your child's teacher.
- Learn more about the curriculum, assessments, and interventions being used in your child's school.
- Practice skills at home to give your child additional support and maximize your child's success.
- Request a conference and make a list of specific questions to ask during the conference.
- Stay informed about the reading foundational skills taught in school and review those with your child.
- Check to see if the school has an after-school tutoring program.
- At the end of the school year, check with your child's school about Summer Learning Camp opportunities.
- Check with your child's school about how to order the at-home reading kits.
- Sign up for the Ready4K app to receive weekly text messages that will provide family activities that support literacy learning.
- Check your local public library for reading opportunities
- Have your child continue to work on their Amplify Reading computer program while at home.
- Sign up to receive the PBS Foundational Skills lesson videos.
- Check out links to the Florida Center for Reading Research for literacy activities for families.

Professional Development Plan

Prior to the 2020-2021 school year, all district instructional staff, building elementary principals, instructional coaches, and K-3rd teachers received 8 hours of the Foundations of Literacy Instruction (FOLI) training. Each year, new K-3rd teachers received the entire FOLI training and were trained by instructional coaches. Returning K-3rd teachers received a yearly overview from instructional

coaches. During the 2020-2021 school year, the elementary education supervisor and instructional coaches participated in the Achieve the Core Foundational Skills Components seven modules training. The modules topics included: Module 1- Foundational Skills Components, Module 2- Phonological Awareness, Module 3- Phonics Part 1, Module 4- Phonics Part 2, Module 5- Early Reading, Module 6- Practice, Practice, Practice, and Module 7- Assessment. Each instructional coach led its K-2nd, ESL, SPED, and Intervention teachers through the Achieve the Core Foundational Skills Components seven modules training. During the 2021-2022 school year, all instructional coaches will lead 3rd-5th grade ELA teachers through the Achieve the Core Foundational Skills Components seven modules training.

Voluntary K-2nd teachers, 3rd-5th teachers, and school and district leaders will participate in the Tennessee Department of Education Early Literacy Reading 360 two week trainings during the summer of 2021. There is participation from all 8 elementary schools. Week one asynchronous training will take place in May, and week two in person training will take place in June and July. There will be Reading 360 Training for Instructional Coaches & Elementary Administrators led by the instructional coach, who is a trained Reading 360 facilitator.

The instructional coach will work closely with the new Director of Curriculum & Instruction, who holds a Reading Specialist Master's degree and has served as a Reading Coach Consultant for TDOE. With the Director of Curriculum & Instruction and Instruction Coach working in close collaboration and with consistent support, the instructional coaches and elementary administrators will support teachers who were not in attendance in summer Early Literacy Reading 360 training. Additionally, those teachers not in attendance this summer will be encouraged to attend training in the summer 2022. During the first nine weeks, grade level PLCs will have a concentrated focus on foundational literacy skills which will include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary development. Teachers will receive other support that may include but is not limited to co-planning, modeling, co-teaching, student work analysis, and reflective conversations about foundational literacy practices. Professional development will be an ongoing, job-embedded practice that focuses on the science of reading for all K-5 educators.